

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-18 and 22-24 are presently active in this case, claims 1 and 9 amended by way of the present Amendment, claims 19-21 canceled and claims 23-24 added by way of the present Amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, claim 9 was objected to for a minor informality, and claims 1-10 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 6,007,355 to Shibata et al.

First, Applicants wish to thank Examiner Le for the January 27, 2006 personal interview at which time the outstanding issues in this case were discussed. During the interview, Applicants presented amendments and arguments substantially as indicated in this response. While no formal agreement was reached, Examiner Le indicated that the amendments and arguments presented appear to overcome the rejection based on Shibata et al.

With regard to the objection of claim 9, since the outstanding Office Action no longer indicates claim 9 as including allowable subject matter, Applicants have now amended claim 9 to be in its original dependent form. This amendment to claim 9 included deleting the portion of claim 9 objected to. Therefore, the objection to claim 9 is overcome.

Turning now to the prior art rejection, in order to expedite issuance of the patent in this case, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to clarify the patentable features of the present invention over the cited references. Specifically, Applicants' claim 1, as amended, recites a rotary connector having a first part and a second part rotationally coupled to the first part to form an interior of the rotary connector. Also recited is a first flat cable having a single ribbon conductor, and a second flat cable having multiple conductor wires wherein the first and second flat cables are housed within the interior of the rotary connector

and each of the first and second flat cables extend in a circumferential direction about an axis of rotation of the rotary connector. Further included is an overcurrent protection device housed within an integral space of the rotary connector and configured to provide overcurrent protection for at least one of the first and second flat cables. Thus, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite that each of the first and second flat cables extend in a circumferential direction about an axis of rotation of the rotary connector.

The cited reference to Shibata et al. discloses a rotary connector having an improved connection point at the junction of an outer cable leading to the connector and an inner cable that is wrapped in a circumferential direction within the connector. Specifically, Figures 1, 2, 4 and 7 of Shibata et al. show an outer cable 5 (5A and 5B) leading to a junction point (6 or 11), which in turn connects to a flat cable 4 that is wound around the conductor interior. Although a small end portion of the outer cable 5 may enter the connector housing 2, no portion of the cable 5 extends a circumferential direction within the connector. Therefore, Shibata et al. does not disclose each of the first and second flat cables extend in a circumferential direction about an axis of rotation of the rotary connector as required by amended claim 1.

Applicants further note that Shibata et al. does not disclose a first flat cable having a single ribbon conductor, and a second flat cable having multiple conductor wires, as also required by Claim 1. In this regard, Applicants note that the recitation of a “single ribbon conductor” clearly indicates that the ribbon conductor is the only conductor of the first flat cable. This interpretation is supported by the specification. In contrast, the outer cable 5 and inner cable 4 of Shibata et al. each include multiple conductors. This provides an additional basis for patentability of claim 1 over Shibata et al.

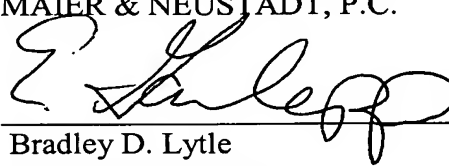
For the reasons discussed above, Applicants’ independent claim 1 patentably defines over the cited references. Moreover, as claims 2-10 and 22-24 depend from claim 1, these claims also patentably define over the cited references. Nevertheless, Applicants note that

newly added dependent claims 23-24 provide additional bases for patentability over Shibata et al. Specifically, claim 23 recites that each of the first and second flat cables comprise an input cable length and an output cable length. As discussed in the January 27th interview, an exemplary configuration covered by this language is shown in Figures 9 and 10 of Applicants specification as originally filed. This structure is also discussed in the description associated with elected Figure 11,¹ and therefore the added claims are part of the elected species. New claim 24 provides an alternative means of claiming the structure of each of the first and second cables by reciting a plurality of first cables and a plurality of second cables. In contrast to claims 23 and 24, the flat cable 4 of Shibata et al. does not include input and output cable lengths, or a plurality of first and second cables. Thus, claims 23 and 24 provide an additional basis for patentability over Shibata et al.

Consequently, in view of the present Amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding on the present application. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ Applicants' specification at page 16, lines 3-19.